North American Francophone and Francophile Cities Network

JOIN TOGETHER | GROW TOGETHER | THRIVE TOGETHER
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The Francophonie in North America embraces millions scattered all across this broad continent. We as mayors have a duty to protect the rich heritage bearing witness to the French fact in North America and to support a contemporary Francophonie solidly anchored in our Canadian and American communities.

It is therefore with great pleasure that we invite you to join our communities—Québec City, Québec, Lafayette, Louisiana, and Moncton, New Brunswick—in founding a network of North American francophone and francophile cities.
The network’s mission will be to draw its members’ and the world’s attention to those cities that are historically, culturally, and linguistically connected to the French fact in North America. We seek with this initiative to support the vitality of today’s francophone and francophile communities while preserving our common heritage for future generations.

We look forward to counting you among us at our future events!

Joey Durel, Mayor of Lafayette

George LeBlanc, Mayor of Moncton
The mayors of Québec, Quebec; Lafayette, Louisiana; and Moncton, New Brunswick—all prominent French-speaking cities in North America—have proposed that a continent-wide network of francophone and francophile municipalities and communities be founded to celebrate their cities’ shared history, heritage, and expertise.

OVERVIEW

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The primary mission of this proposed network of cities linked historically, culturally, and linguistically to the French reality in North America would be to further knowledge about these communities—among themselves and around the world—and to promote their many attractions.

The network would also assist its members in
• supporting each other to preserve their francophone heritage,
• contributing to the vitality of francophone communities,
• supporting the economic development of member communities, and
• cooperating to address the needs of members.

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER TO PRESERVE FRANCOPHONE HERITAGE

The network members would pledge to work together to preserve and develop their francophone heritage, like traces of the colonization process or the French Regime, buildings bearing witness to the French Canadian migrations and memorial sites.

A possible first step might be to inventory the cultural and historical heritage relating to the French reality in North America. Municipal governments could partner with institutions like Québec City’s Musée de l’Amérique francophone to do this. The resulting list could be promoted through a virtual introduction that would feed into a tourist route discussed below.

Members would also be encouraged to showcase their francophone heritage on their municipal websites. Network members with heritage preservation and promotion teams in place could also make them available to other members through cooperative exchanges.
DID YOU KNOW?

9 of America’s 50 state capitals have French names or names that come from French (Baton-Rouge, Boise, Des Moines, Juneau, Montgomery, Montpelier, Pierre, Richmond, and Saint Paul), not counting Little Rock (originally Petite Roche) or Cheyenne (a French word of Lakota origin).

15 of America’s 50 states have French or French-derived names (Delaware, New Jersey, Louisiana, Maine, Oregon, and Vermont) or French explorers’ versions of Native American names (Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin).

2 mayors of Los Angeles were French Canadians:

Damien Marchesseault (1818–1868), mayor from 1859 to 1865 who built today’s Sunset Boulevard, and Prudent Beaudry (1818–1893), the city’s 13th mayor, in office from 1874 to 1876, whose brother Jean-Louis was mayor of Montréal at the same time.

4 American presidents (John Tyler, James B. Garfield, Theodore Roosevelt, and Franklin D. Roosevelt) and revolutionary hero Paul Revere were all of Huguenot descent.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE VITALITY OF FRANCOPHILE COMMUNITIES

Mayors Régis Labeaume of Québec, Joey Durel of Lafayette, and George LeBlanc of Moncton hope to spur and support the initiatives and accomplishments of North American francophone communities and encourage their fellow mayors to follow suit.

A number of outside partners would be approached and encouraged to work with the communities in establishing the network, including French-language organizations such as Alliance Française, tourism offices, chambers of commerce, universities, research centres, genealogy centres, and others.

Many regional associations of municipalities could also play an important role or even join the network as members, thus affording an opportunity for smaller cities to be represented on a permanent basis.

Québec City is home to Centre de la francophonie des Amériques, whose mission includes the promotion of dialogue, partnerships and French-language networks aimed at supporting seminal social projects and keeping the world up to date on francophone-related themes. The network is a perfect fit with this mission, and the Centre’s involvement would make its expertise available to network members.

Québec City is also home to several genealogical associations as well as Fédération des associations de familles du Québec. These organizations assist people of French Canadian descent from all over North America to retrace their roots, find out more about their ancestors, and reestablish family ties lost in time.
DID YOU KNOW?

New England writers Jack Kerouac (On the Road), Annie Proulx (Brokeback Mountain, The Shipping News), and Grace Metalious (author of Peyton Place and whose real name was Marie Grace DeRepentigny) all had French Canadian parents.

Between a third and half of all basic words in English come from French, including pedigree, surf, view, strive, challenge, pride, staunch, and war, as well as more obvious ones like roulette, automobile, garage, lingerie, restaurant, crayon, bouquet, and boutique.

Half the foreign films and 30% of all foreign books in the United States are in French.

There’s a French Canadian on the American “golden dollar.”

It’s Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau, the son of Sacagawea and Toussaint Charbonneau—two of the guides and interpreters on Lewis and Clark’s expedition across the West.

Baby Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau sleeps peacefully, unaware that he will one day be immortalized by the U.S. mint.

SUPPORTING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBER COMMUNITIES

La Francophonie is very much alive in North America, and the continent’s millions of French speakers in communities both small and large deserve the best efforts of their elected officials to provide them with the optimum conditions to thrive under. Often the best way to do so is to support their communities’ economic development.

One of the first initiatives the North American Francophone and Francophile Cities Network might undertake could be to establish a tourist trail connecting the members together. It could take the form of a shared website where potential travellers from inside and outside the network could plan trips to explore North America’s francophone heritage.

Partnership in the trail would benefit all network members by drawing thousands of North American travellers looking for French-language services as well as European tourists seeking out North America’s francophone roots in Acadia or Louisiana, on cruises down the Mississippi, or at leading urban attractions and festivals.

The potential for development of business relationships among member cities’ chambers of commerce is also far from insignificant. The increasingly widespread concept of “smart cities” is another avenue to explore in bringing network members closer together.
COOPERATION TO ADDRESS
THE MEMBER’S NEEDS

The new network offers North American francophone and francophile communities an international forum where they can discuss and think about LaFrancophonie, history, culture, heritage, economy, tourism, and other common concerns. It could even lead to greater cooperation in municipal management if members so desire. There is no shortage of opportunity here to develop and share best practices.

One such example can be seen in how cities around the world are integrating sustainable development principles into their management practices. In this regard, Québec City is privileged to be home to Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable. North American lifestyles often call for North American solutions, so network members would do well to take advantage of a forum where they can discuss their own successes in this area.

Network members who wish might also be encouraged to present their expertise outside the continent by joining AIMF, an international association of francophone mayors from 48 countries where French is the official language, the language of communication or in widespread use and that share such values as participative democracy, local development planning, and women’s role in decision-making processes.

IMPLEMENTATION
CALENDAR

The network’s first preparatory meeting will be held at Grand Sault, New Brunswick, on August 16, 2014, as part of Congrès mondial acadien 2014.

Other meetings of interested elected officials from North American cities may be held in the United States in 2015, culminating in the official foundation of the North American Francophone and Francophile Cities Network at an October 2015 meeting of the mayors in Québec City.

The upcoming months will be used to spread the word, recruit potential member cities, and put a permanent foundation in place for the network.
Québec City is Québec’s national capital and is renowned for its charm, exceptional quality of life, and thriving cultural scene. Its city population is over 515,000 and it commands a metropolitan area of over 765,000 people. It is the second-largest economic hub in the province and the 7th largest in Canada. The city is an international tourist draw with its francophone culture, intact system of fortifications, urban landscapes interwoven with green space, and neighbourhoods built to a human scale. A bustling capital, it is steeped in attractions and welcomes close to 4.7 million visitors each year.

The Port of Québec hosts some 30 of the world’s biggest cruise ships operated by the most prestigious international cruise lines. The city today has carved out a select place in this competitive international market and welcomes over 160,000 passengers annually.
QUÉBEC, NORTH AMERICA’S PREEMINENT FRANCOPHONE CITY

Many of La Francophonie’s key institutions, organizations, and events are in Québec City, including:

- Centre de la francophonie des Amériques, which promotes partnerships and francophone networks in Canada and North America and supports projects and activities
- Musée de l’Amérique francophone, Canada’s oldest museum, which presents exhibitions on the establishment and development of French culture in North America
- Université Laval, the oldest French-language university in North America, which boasts a number of research chairs on La Francophonie
- Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable, a branch of Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie that contributes to the development of partnerships and the promotion of sustainable development in the French-speaking world
- Association canadienne d’éducation de langue française, a nonprofit organization that plays a leadership role through its Canada-wide network in maintaining the vitality of francophone communities
- Fédération des associations des familles du Québec, which focuses primarily on organizing and presenting talks, meetings, assemblies, and exhibitions to promote, develop, and popularize history, genealogy, and all things relating to the founding families
- Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada (Québec section), which takes a leadership role in La Francophonie’s network of organizations and institutions with its 12 francophone associations and 9 national organizations
- The New France Festival, which fills the streets of the old city for 5 days of celebrations to commemorate the historic events that unfolded after the arrival of the first Europeans in North America

Québec City also hosts numerous events relating to La Francophonie around the world. It has twice hosted Sommet de la Francophonie, in 1987 and 2008, as well as the inaugural Forum mondial de la langue française in 2012.

A THRIVING CULTURAL CITY

A hotbed of creative activity, Québec City is home to a multitude of artists and performers who have chosen to ply their trade in this supportive and exciting community. Its cultural scene is rich, varied, and lively. Artists from disciplines such as visual arts, media arts, theatre, dance, music, and literature are valued and respected. A host of organizations and centres for performance, education, and exhibitions have made Québec City the place to go for training, creativity, production, and public outreach of every kind.

Québec is host to numerous major festivals and other cultural manifestations. Its winter carnival has been warming the hearts of young and old for 60 years, and its summer festival has acquired an international reputation that draws the biggest names on the world stage.
A COMPELLING ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

One of the city’s riches is unquestionably its 10,000 years of archaeological heritage. Archaeological remains, artifacts, and ecofacts unearthed at a number of sites have improved our understanding of the past and added to what we know about the environment, lifestyles, and events that have marked centuries of human occupation.

In 25 years of research, over 800 archaeological sites—many of them significant finds—have been identified and excavated throughout the city. The city also boasts numerous museums and exhibition and interpretive centres that showcase both the heritage of the past and the vitality of contemporary artisans and artists.

A SPECTACULAR NATURAL SETTING

Founded in the early 17th century at the foot of Cape Diamond, Québec City has preserved the main features of its landscape and past. Its narrow streets, remarkable defenses, and original architecture—a blend of French and British influences—are all reminders of its role as a colonial capital, military stronghold, and busy port.

Not far from the city centre lie Île d’Orléans and Côte-de-Beaupré, whose rural landscapes embody four centuries of history with their magnificent 18th and 19th-century homes, centuries-old churches, and ancestral farms. Maison Drouin, built around 1730, is a typical home of New France and has lost none of its authenticity. La Maison de nos Aïeux on Île d’Orléans presents a wealth of information on island genealogy.

The New France Route is a tourism route travelled each year by thousands of visitors in search of their origins. An appreciated resource is Centre de généalogie, des archives et des biens culturels in Château-Richer, where history and genealogy are the feature attractions.

For about four months of the year, Québec City lives under a blanket of snow. An average of 320 cm falls each winter. Far from discouraging the city’s residents, this winter wonderland spurs them on to all sorts of outdoor family activities. In summer the streets and public squares are awash in flowers as festivals and celebrations spring up all around. Then in fall the mountains come ablaze in hues of yellow, red, and orange, wrapping the city in another kind of enchantment.

A UNIQUELY DIFFERENT HISTORIC CITY

Québec is among the world’s 12 most-visited cities, thanks in large part to the enchantment of its old city. The district was added to UNESCO’s World Heritage List in 1985, recognizing it as part of the birthright and legacy of all humanity. Old Québec is on UNESCO’s World Heritage List for two reasons: it is an outstanding and well-preserved example of a fortified colonial city, and as the former capital of New France, it represents an important phase in the colonization of the Americas. The city’s francophone cultural heritage combines 400 years of European and aboriginal influences with the excitement of modern-day North America.
A TURBULENT COLONIAL HISTORY

The French presence in Acadia began in 1604 with a fur trading post on tiny Saint Croix Island in the mouth of the Saint Croix River, part of a trading mission sent by Henry IV and commanded by Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Mons.

The island today is an International Historic Site marking the beginning of the Acadian adventure three years before the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, and four before the foundation of Québec by Samuel de Champlain—present as well in 1604 on Saint Croix Island—in 1608. Even though the French abandoned Saint Croix Island in 1605 and moved to Port Royal in Nova Scotia, 1604 remains a pivotal year in the history of North America’s French-speaking peoples.
Beginning in the 1630s, families, mainly from west-central France, came to settle in the Port Royal area and in villages such as Beaubassin and Grand Pré. By the turn of the century these settlers had developed their own new North American identity—they were Acadian. Thus although the population of Acadia was never as great as that of the neighbouring St. Lawrence Valley, it nonetheless constituted a homeland unto itself. In 1713 Acadia was ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht and became Nova Scotia, meaning New Scotland. Acadian leaders of the time sought to negotiate their allegiance to the British Empire and promoted a policy of neutrality. With it, Acadians could balance—however precariously—their duty of loyalty to the British Crown with repeated appeals from the French colonial authorities to remain true to their status as Roman Catholics and former subjects of the King of France.

The outbreak of war between France and Great Britain in North America spelled the end to that fragile equilibrium. Between 1755 and 1763, the British forcibly expelled over 14,000 Acadians. This was the Expulsion of the Acadians, or the Great Upheaval (Le Grand Dérandement). Driven from their lands, their villages reduced to ashes and goods confiscated in the name of George III, the Acadians were scattered among the 13 British colonies, deported to England, shipped back to France, or shipped far away to attempt to found colonies in Saint-Domingue (Haiti), French Guiana, or even the Falkland Islands. The St. Lawrence Valley, however, became the deportees’ main place of refuge. Thousands of exiled Acadians set out for what was to become Québec to start over and eventually melt into the rest of the French Canadian population. Today over a million Quebecers can trace their ancestry back to those uprooted Acadians.

The British aim with this radical policy was to destroy Acadian society, but the Acadians proved resilient. Not only did they manage to build Acadia anew in what were to become Canada’s Maritime Provinces, but they managed to forge a new and distinct identity in Louisiana, where several hundred Acadian families ended up after leaving France in the 1780s, settling what became Acadiana, homeland of Cajun culture, centered on Lafayette. Although the French language has perhaps faded from many Cajuns’ day-to-day lives, Cajun culture remains very much alive and is proudly claimed by nearly a million people.
A SOCIETY IS REBUILT

The 1763 Treaty of Paris stripped France of all its North American colonies except for the islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. Exile was at an end for the Acadians of the Maritimes, and their main concern shifted to rebuilding a society scattered in tiny remnants along the coastlines of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Many clustered in the Memramcook Valley in southeastern New Brunswick, while other families were settled along the St. John River in Madawaska. Chaleur Bay’s Gaspé shore and the Magdalen Islands became major destinations for Acadians back from exile.

Without legal rights or political representation, the future of the Acadians was made all the more precarious by the arrival of floods of British Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution in the 1780s. The founding of New Brunswick in 1784 had no great effect initially, although it was in this province that they would eventually build up the network of institutions that by the last third of the 19th century had laid the groundwork for the Acadian Renaissance.

Acadian leaders’ used the 1864 opening of Collège Saint-Joseph in Memramcook by a group of Holy Cross Fathers from Montréal, followed by the establishment of a number of other colleges, monasteries, and convents to cement their claim to a national identity. The confederation of Canada in 1867 brought the first Acadian newspaper, Le Moniteur Acadien, in Shédiac, followed by the first Acadian national conventions in Memramcook in 1881, Miscouche in 1884, and Pointe-de-l’Église in 1890, where national symbols such as a national holiday, the Tricolour Star flag, and the national anthem Ave Maris Stella were adopted. In these early days of confederation, Acadian leaders advocated a society in which the French language and Roman Catholic faith were inseparable, and cordial relations with neighbouring anglophones highly desired, although this often remained more aspirational than actual. Conflict can be seen for example in Acadian leaders’ prolonged struggle with the Scots and Irish church hierarchy in the Maritimes to have an Acadian consecrated as bishop. Not until 1912 was an Acadian priest, Alfred-Édouard LeBlanc from St. Marys Bay, Nova Scotia, finally installed as bishop at Saint John, New Brunswick.

Acadians in the Maritimes would travel a long road in the course of the 20th century toward full equality with their English-speaking neighbours, especially in New Brunswick. Along the way, the City of Moncton gradually emerged as the focal point of Acadian institutions. The newspaper L’Évangéline opened there in 1905, remaining until its closure in 1982. Société Mutuelle de l’Assomption, today’s Assumption Life, has been headquartered there since 1913, and the diocese was elevated to the status of archdiocese in 1936. Société Radio-Canada has been in the city since 1954 and maintains there the largest French-language production centre outside Montréal. The University of Moncton was founded in 1963 and now operates satellite campuses in Edmundston in the northwest and Shippagan in the Acadian Peninsula. The city has had a French consulate general since 1964, and Québec’s Atlantic Provinces Office opened there in 1980. Moncton today is truly the nerve centre of contemporary Acadia.
AN ACADIAN “QUIET REVOLUTION”

The 1960s were particularly significant for New Brunswick’s Acadian community. The election of the province’s first-ever Acadian premier, Louis J. Robichaud, in 1960, ushered in Acadia’s own “Quiet Revolution.” In 1969 New Brunswick became—and remains—Canada’s only bilingual province, and with bilingualism came a whole series of language rights along with new education, health, and municipal infrastructure. The 1970s saw an upsurge of artistic and cultural creativity and a dynamic renewal of Acadian community life and political engagement.

Les Éditions d’Acadie was founded in Moncton in 1972, Théâtre populaire d’Acadie in Caraquet in 1974, and Théâtre l’Escaouette in Moncton in 1978. The decade closed out with a bang in 1979 as Antoine Maillet became the first and still only Canadian ever to receive the Prix Goncourt, for her novel Pélagie-la-Charrette (Pélagie: The Return to Acadie), in which she thumbs her nose at the British and their Great Disruption with a lineup of characters who refuse to lie down before the chariot of death and choose instead to devote their energies to returning to their homeland of Acadia. Also in 1979 were the celebrations of the 375th anniversary of Acadia’s founding on St. Croix Island, with events such as the inaugural Acadian Games in Moncton the same year.

Today’s Acadia continues to thrive in regions of the four Canadian Atlantic provinces where everyday life and conversation take place in French. Moncton remains the heart of this 300,000-strong nation. After hosting the 8th Sommet de la francophonie in September 1999, in 2002 it became Canada’s sole major city to declare itself officially bilingual. It has inspired such singers and poets as the late Gérard Leblanc, and its cultural life abounds with activities in which French is the order of the day, such as Festival international du film francophone en Acadie, FrancoFête en Acadie, the [Northrop] Frye Festival—Canada’s only bilingual international literary festival—and much more.

Numerous challenges confront contemporary Acadia, and progress has been uneven, as it has in the North American French-speaking world in general. The Acadians of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador lack some of the rights and guarantees enjoyed by their compatriots in New Brunswick, where the equality of French and English is enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. Nonetheless, Acadians continue to remain vigilant and have kept that festive spirit that neither the Great Upheaval nor the repeated attempts at assimilation since then have been able to dim. Today’s Acadians bring a voice and colourful accent all their own to La Francophonie internationale. In the words of Moncton’s unofficial poet laureate Gérard Leblanc, “Acadia is a constellation of words in the galaxy of human languages . . . In us incompleteness and becoming stand and wonder, and we go on among the living.”
APPENDIX 1

THE FRENCH FACT IN NORTH AMERICA

French is present not only in Quebec and Acadia (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island), but throughout the whole North America, from east to west and north to south. Its culture embraces all of present day United States having spread from original settlements, some of which developed endogenously such as in Louisiana and New England. The very existence today of a dynamic French culture in North America is the result of a long historical process that has lasted for nearly 400 years.

EXPLORATIONS, TRADE AND MÉTISSAGE

The rapid expansion of the French colonial influence in North America towards the end of the 18th century was due to the combined effects of explorations, trade, and interethnic alliances, all of which had a common purpose which was to reach the mythical Mer de l’Ouest, which according to geographers of the time would give access to Northern China and all its wealth. It is in this context that the first French North American settlements were created – not only in the St. Lawrence Valley and Acadia, but also in the Country of the Illinois and Louisiana. These colonial establishments were first set up by the French authorities, then by Anglo-Scottish traders, forming a vast network of trading posts and forts that went well beyond the St. Lawrence Valley as far as the Great Lakes, covered the Upper Mississippi, and went as far as the Rocky Mountains, thus ensuring the control of the continent’s main waterways.

THE GREAT LAKES

The first catholic mission and trading posts were set up in the Great Lakes area, a tradition initiated under the realm of Samuel de Champlain in his efforts to explore the region at the beginning of the 17th century. Other than the important missions of Sault-Sainte-Marie or Saint-Ignace de Michilimackinac, other establishments were also founded such as Fort Frontenac (Lake Ontario), Fort Niagara, Fort Rouillé (present-day Toronto), or Fort Pontchartrin (Detroit). Because colonial representatives were few in number, ultimately Métis families would be in control of the fur trade. Such was the case of the Cadottes of Sault-Sainte-Marie in Wisconsin. At Michilimackinac, the La Framboise family dominated, they would be followed by many others: the Langlades, Bertands or Desrivières for example.
Appendix 1: The French fact in North America

ILLINOIS COUNTRY
In this region that would eventually become part of the United States, the mighty Mississippi became the backbone of the French settlements be it in the Illinois Country (also known as Upper Louisiana) or in the colony of Louisiana (Lower Louisiana). Father Marquette established the first non-native mission, The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin at Kaskaskia, in Illinois Country. It soon became the hub of the area surrounded by many forts such as Fort Crèvecoeur on the east bank of the Illinois River, Fort Saint-Louis near Kaskaskia, or Fort de Chartres further north. The region was an important transit point between Lower Louisiana and Canada, where most of its population originated. Part of the population was made up of trappers who, facing the many trade restrictions in the Great Lakes area chose to settle permanently in this rich agricultural zone. The authorities chose wheat as the favoured staple not only for local consumption, but to meet the needs of the Louisiana colony further south, in the Mississippi Delta. Just as in Canada, the agricultural land was divided into long narrow lots perpendicular to the river. Here, however, the population lived in small villages for better protection against Native attacks. During the French Regime, six villages would be set up downriver where the Missouri and Kaskaskia rivers meet: Cahokia, St. Philippe, Fort de Chartres, Prairie du Rocher, Ste. Geneviève, and Kaskaskia. In 1764, after Louisiana had come under Spanish rule, Frenchman Pierre Laclède founded St. Louis. It was there that Métis families such as the Chouteaus would, at the turn of the 18th century, start trading with the aboriginal population of the Lower Missouri region, and would gradually set up new settlements further west. Kansas City was built precisely where François Chouteau’s old trading post once stood. Métis families would often choose to live along the Missouri River, or further north in Minnesota. Many of them would become guides and interpreters for various Anglo-American explorers—such was the case of Charbonneau, Drouillard, Tabeau or Garreau who actively took part in the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804.

LOUISIANA
The colony of Louisiana was founded in 1717, following Robert Cavalier de La Salle exploration of the Mississippi Delta at the end of the 17th century. The first settlers were spread out along the shores of the Mississippi and Mobile rivers, except for New Orleans where the density of the population was much higher.

Louisiana’s population changed somewhat between 1765 and 1785 with the coming of nearly 3000 Acadians who arrived in successive waves after their dispersion, they settled at the trading post of Cabanocé, that of the Attakapas (which will become Saint-Martinville), in the fields along the Bayou Tèche, more specifically at Fausse Pointe (now Loreauville), on the German Coast, in the areas surrounding Fort Saint-Gabriel and the Iberville River (now known as Bayou Manchac), at Fort Saint-Louis in Natchez, as well as along Bayou Lafourche. More that 10000 Creoles from Saint-Domingue, fleeing the slave revolt in the French colony, joined the Acadian exiles between 1792 and 1809.

A new culture emerged from this interethnic community, the Cajun culture, which took hold mostly in the Acadian enclaves—in the distant prairies west of the Mississippi, in the marshes of the Atchafalaya River and Bayou Lafourche, as well as in the coastal swamps.

The plains of the Canadian West
The explorations of the Canadian Pierre Gaultier de Varennes sieur de La Vérendrye of the vast plains that stretched west to the foot of the “Montagnes de Roches lumineuses” (the Rocky Mountains) led to the expansion of the French colonial sphere of influence in the 1730s. La Vérendrye set up a series of trading forts in the Red River region (Manitoba). When the Anglo-Scottish merchants of the North-West Company (NWC) headquartered in Montreal took over the old trading territories in the region at the end of the 18th century many Canadians, such as Fleurimond who was born around 1735 from a Sioux mother and François Beaulieu born in 1771 from an Innu woman, were still living in the area.

Between 1790 and 1821, the NWC employed nearly 5000 voyageurs and winterers, essentially French Canadians from the St. Lawrence Valley, to successfully carry out the commercial activities in the Northwest. Living year-round in an aboriginal milieu favoured interethnic marriages. Thus, in this vast region, one could find many Métis communities: Cold Lake (Lac Froid), Lesser Slave Lake (Petit Lac des Esclaves), Lake La Biche or at Portage la Loche. The Red River colony – situated where the Assiniboine and Red rivers meet in the heart of Manitoba – was the most important Métis settlement, it incorporated St. Vital, Ste. Agathe and White Horse Plain on the Assiniboine River.
THE CROOLE AREA AROUND 1765

Appendix 1: The french fact in North America

Conceptualisation: Étienne Rivard, Dean Louder, Jeanne Valois
Réalisation: Renée Sénéchal-Huot
MIGRATIONS, FAMILY AND DIVERSITY

The 19th century brought on the strongest demographic growth of the French-speaking population in North America: transatlantic migrations were on the rise and Canadian and American national territories were expanding rapidly. These new migrants would greatly affect the cultural diversity of the French fact in North America: in addition to the presence of French Canadians, Métis and Cajuns, newcomers arrived from France (especially from Brittany), Wallonia (French-speaking Belgium), and Switzerland.

NEW ENGLAND

The words industrialization/migration have a particular resonance in the lives of many French Canadians, especially to the many who left the St. Lawrence Valley for the industrial cities of New England; at the end of the 19th century, at the peak of the phenomenon, some 600,000 French Canadians who lived in these cities accounted for 10% of the total population.

The migrants who choose to settle permanently here and there in New England were perfectly in phase with certain dominant trends of the time. Thus, early on in the century, although families chose to live in Boston, Woonsocket (Rhode Island), and Worcester (Massachusetts) or Concord and Manchester (New Hampshire), the great majority of French Canadian migrants would settle in Vermont and Maine. It is only with the arrival of the railway in the middle of the century that the southern part of New England would become more appealing to them. If Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire welcomed two out of three migrants in 1860, this proportion would rise to 80% by the end of the century. It is the development of the cotton, wool, and shoe manufacturing industries as well as the better salaries that attracted these new migrants.

The French-speaking migrants grouped together to form a number of petits Canadas, which were urban areas where French is most commonly spoken. Such is the case in the Arrostook Valley (Maine) where they counted for 90% of the total population. In Vermont, they were concentrated in Winooski – half of the population was of French Canadian origin at the time – in Vergennes, two out of five people were French-speaking, and in Burlington, one out of four. They also were the majority in Suncook (New Hampshire) and Woonsocket (Rhode Island), and were quite numerous in other industrial cities such as Manchester (New Hampshire) or Lowell (Massachusetts).

THE MIDWEST

The Midwest became an area of intensive colonization at the end of the British-American War of 1812-1814, and with the opening of the Erie Canal ten years later. There were vast migrations of various ethnic groups. To the contingents of immigrants from Europe and eastern United States, one must add a few thousands French Canadians. Although the French-speaking migrants were a minority, the 45,000 French Canadians that lived in the area in 1860 counted for nearly one half of all migrants from Quebec in the whole of the United States.

At first it was the furs, then it was the forest that attracted many to the Midwest. French Canadians were known to be very skillful in both these sectors of activity. They were to be found in large numbers in the sawmills of the Muskegon, Sable and Saginaw rivers, and from 1860 onwards, there were sizable concentrations of them in various companies in Michigan such as in Bay City, Saginaw City, and East Saginaw where they counted for nearly one third of the total population at the end of the century. The situation was similar in Wisconsin, although there were fewer in number than in Michigan. They could be found scattered in the vicinity of Marinette, Green Bay or Duluth where, in 1884, the first French Canadian parish was founded.

The fur trade was a major incentive for the development of Minnesota who saw the arrival of its first settlers around 1850. When the fur trade declined, many turned to farming, settling around St. Paul, often near established Métis communities. Such was the case of the Métis family of Pierre Bottineau, who was to leave his name to a county in North Dakota. This family of traders facilitated the development of many French Canadian communities between Minneapolis and Red River, in particular at Emardville, Crookston, Huot, Terrebonne, and Gentilly. There were nearly 5000 French Canadians in the region in the 1880s.
THE CANADIAN WEST

The creation of Manitoba in 1870, which is still today the very heart of Métis territory, saw the beginning of massive colonization in Western Canada. It was there that, from 1870 to 1880, the first cohort of settlers came from Ontario, Quebec and the United States. But it was from 1897 to 1920 that the main wave of settlers would unfurl on the Canadian Prairies. Other than a substantial increase in the number of settlers, it was the diversity of their origins that was the main characteristic of this migration boom, a number of migrants came from the British Isles, France, and Belgium as well as from southern and Eastern Europe. Thus, other French-speaking immigrants, mostly from Britain and Belgium, joined the Métis and French Canadian population.

Many French-speaking communities were founded between 1870 and 1920, often where Métis had been established previously. In Manitoba, other than the few Belgians that joined the French-speaking communities within the limits of the already established Red River colony, most of the newly arrived settled west of Winnipeg, along the Assiniboine River, and in the north of the province. They founded new settlements such as Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Saint-Claude or Grande-Clairière. In Saskatchewan, the French-speaking migrants settled along the Manitoban border – in Bellegarde, Cantal and La Rolanderie (known today as Saint-Hubert) –, in the area of Montagne de Bois (Gravelbourg et Willowbunch), and in the former Métis strongholds near Batoche and Saint-Laurent-de-Grandin in the centre of northern Saskatchewan. French-speaking immigration in Alberta is concentrated mostly in three regions populated for a long time by Métis communities that are still very much alive in the north of the province: around Edmonton (Saint-Albert, Lac Sainte-Anne, Morinville, Beaumont, Légal, Rivière-qui-Barre et Villeneuve); in the north-east, around Lake La Biche, Bonnyville and Saint-Paul-des-Métis; in the north-west, in the towns of Girouxville, Donnelly or Falher.

CALIFORNIA AND THE QUEST FOR GOLD

The Gold Rush was the main driving force behind the development of California. All wanted a share in the stakes, and French-speaking people were no exception; many came from France and Quebec, but also from Wallonia and Switzerland. San Francisco and Los Angeles rapidly became the preferred places to settle and soon enough French-speaking quarters sprung up. Many Francophones became key political players in their communities, especially in Los Angeles where for the first three decades of the 19th century there were always representatives of the French-speaking community on the City Council, some even became mayor. Amongst them was Prudent Beaudry, originally from the Province of Quebec, who was elected mayor in 1875. He was actively engaged in the betterment of the city and was very much involved in the real-estate development of Bunker Hill, which is now situated in the heart of the city. A street in downtown Los Angeles now bears his name.

The Status of French in the United States Today: Diasporas and the cosmopolitan nature of metropolitan areas

Even if the population of contemporary French-speaking communities are few in number they are still very much alive and full of vitality wherever they may be in the United States. Forty per cent of Francophones can be found in four States – New York, Louisiana, California and Florida – which is a substantial part of the national territory. This brief summary is essentially based on past historical realities and contemporary dynamics that are mostly linked to transnational migrations.

OLD SETTLEMENTS

One first notices that many historic settlements be it in New England or in Louisiana are still in existence and that, even today, the percentage of French-speakers in these communities is widely superior to that of the national average. Amongst them, Maine and Louisiana stand out. In Louisiana there are no less than 15 parishes out of the 24 counties where more than 25% of the population declared having a French origin. Two counties in Maine (Androscoggin and Aroostook), three in Vermont (Franklin, Orleans and Essex), and one in New Hampshire (Coos) are also part of this group of 24. One might add the counties of Kennebec and Somerset in Maine that are just under the 25% mark. In fact all counties, be it in Vermont or Maine, have a rate equal or superior to 10%. The main local bastions of French speakers are found in Louisiana, in particular in the parishes of Acadia, Assumption, Avoyelles, Evangeline, Lafourche, Saint-Martin, and Vermilion. More than 10% of the population in the counties of Aroostook (Maine) and Coos (New Hampshire) speak French at home. These ratios are most significant given the national linguistic context.
A CHANGING PANORAMA

The social contribution of Francophones in the United States today is quite different than what it was a few decades ago. Thus, in 2010, the State of California held the third position for the number of French-speakers. Nearly one French speaker out of ten in the United States lives in the Golden State, which is more than what it was in 2000 (8.2%) or in 1990 (6.9%). Moreover, of all the counties in the United States, the county of Los Angeles comes first for the number of people who speak French at home. Similarly to the large cities on the east coast, California’s French population has always been very cosmopolitan and even today the population of these communities is constantly been renewed with the arrival of various French-speaking foreign nationals. These dynamics may also be at play in Texas who now ranks fifth, in front of the State of Maine, for its number of French-speakers: nationwide the proportion of Francophones in Texas was 3.8% in 2000 and it rose to 4.4% in 2010.

The State of Florida is very unique as to the presence of French in its midst. If in 2010, the presence of Francophones is still relatively low in Florida – the State holding nonetheless the eleventh position –, one notes a slight increase from 2000 to 2010. Florida ranks fourth for the number of French-speakers, having just 30000 Francophones less than the leader, the State of New York. Another unique characteristic of Florida is the presence of a large number of Haitians, a diaspora which is constantly welcoming new members. Thus, if we add the Creoles to the French-speaking population of Florida, the State would be in first place with its 564000 speakers; the State of New York following in second place with nearly 120000 Francophones. Between 2000 and 2010, more than half of the Creole migrants settled in Florida, which thus became the principal meeting point for them in the United States.

The Creole population in the United States shows a significant annual average growth of 3.4% between 2000 and 2010, which corresponds to a total gain of more than 200000 people. During the same period, the relative weight of the Creole language in the French-speaking world has risen by 11%. Proportionally the number of Creole-speakers is rising everywhere in the United States, except for the following States: New Hampshire, Arkansas, Montana, Wyoming, West Virginia, and South Dakota. Four States have a Creole population which ranks higher than that of the national average: Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Florida; while the Creole population in New York, Rhode Island, and Delaware has increased more than 10%. Massachusetts is the only State in New England to have shown a substantial gain in the number of Creoles, it now comes in fourth on the national level.

Eighty-five percent of Creolophones live in four States: Florida, New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. The great majority is found in large cities in Florida and in the metropolises of Eastern United States, particularly in metropolitan New York (in many counties in New Jersey, and in Long Island). Ninety-five percent of the people who declare they speak Creole in the State of New York live in the metropolis. This phenomenon of metropolization of immigrants is not a specific to the Haitian diaspora; it is the case with most of the contemporary transnational migrations, including those concerning the French-speaking population. In this particular case it is the scale of the Haitian migratory phenomenon which has made it a structuring sociocultural reality, and even more so when takes into account all of the French-speaking communities.

There is hardly any place in North America that has not been, at one point in time, visited by various peoples whose mother tongue was French. Amongst them, many were considered pioneers, sometimes serving as guides for American explorers. Others founded settlements, mostly in Louisiana or in Maine, that are still very much alive today. The 12.4 million Americans who, in 2010, claim to have French, French-Canadian or Cajun origins are a living testimony to the vitality of this culture today.

Even if the French language is in relative decline in many historical settlements in the United States, be it in New England or Louisiana, it is still valued as an important part of their collective identity. One must recognize that, second to Quebecers, Acadians and Franco-Ontarians, Franco-Americans are a force to be reckoned with. Because Francophones are now spread out all over the United States, it seems hard to believe that there are 1.34 million individuals who speak the French in their home. This very fact compares favourably to the situation in Canada where, if it were not for Quebecers, French would be spoken by only 600000 individuals.

Main Areas of French Settlement in North America

Appendix 1: The French fact in North America
Appendix 2: The Breadth and Scope of French-speaking North America

Did you know that there are more than 20 million French speakers in North America? Some 9.6 million live in Canada and 11 million reside in the United States.

HISTORY

In 1535 Jacques Cartier claimed the Gaspé Peninsula in the name of the King of France, marking the start of French rule in North America.

Though only a few thousand citizens left France to begin a new life in the colonies, France’s decision to cultivate strong ties with the First Nations—unlike the Spanish, Portuguese, and British—met with success. France wanted economic growth but did not want to send waves of immigrants. Champlain’s prophetic words from an early exchange with the First Nations would soon prove true: “Our sons will marry your daughters, and we will be but one people.”

By the end of the French Regime (1763), New France had spread over nearly two-thirds of North America despite a modest population of fewer than 100,000 citizens. During that same period, the population of the British colonies reached nearly two million in a dense swath along the eastern seaboard ending at the Appalachian foothills.

French alliances with the First Nations and subsequent intermarriage and cultural intermingling had deep and lasting impacts on the development of the North America’s French-speaking settlers: the Canadiens, as they had come to be called under French rule, were known for their indomitable spirit and unquenchable thirst for freedom and wide-open spaces.

FRENCH IN CANADA

Today francophones represent some 22.9% of Canada’s population, and anglophones 53.9%. Still, nearly 10 million Canadians, or 30% of the population, can speak French. Francophones form a majority in all of the regions and regional county municipalities (RCMs) of Québec, with the exception of Pontiac, where they make up slightly more than 40% of the population, and Côte-Nord-du-Golfe-du-Saint-Laurent and Nord-du-Québec, where they also represent roughly 40% of the population. In Québec, most municipalities are represented by one of two organizations: Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ) or Fédération québécoise des municipalités.

Outside Québec, francophones represent 4.5% of the Canadian population—roughly equivalent to the First Nations—with the exception of New Brunswick, where they make up approximately a third of the population and form a majority throughout the northern and eastern parts of the province. In New Brunswick, francophone municipalities belong to the Association of Francophone Municipalities of New Brunswick. Elsewhere in the Atlantic Provinces, francophones form a majority in the communities of Arichat, Isle Madame, Chéticamp, Argyle, and Clare in Nova Scotia; the Évangeline region of PEI; and much of the Port-au-Port Peninsula in Newfoundland and Labrador. High concentrations of francophones can also be found in some parts of southern Labrador, near the border with Québec’s Côte-Nord.
In other Canadian provinces, francophones form a significant proportion or majority in eastern Ontario (United Counties of Prescott and Russell and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry), in Ottawa, and throughout the province’s northeast. Francophone municipalities in Ontario belong to L’Association française des municipalités de l’Ontario. Francophone municipalities in Ontario belong to in Ottawa, and throughout the province’s northeast.

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Canada's 5.1 million students receive instruction in French, growing interest in the French language. According to Statistics Canada’s 5.1 million students receive instruction in French, growing interest in the French language. According to Statistics

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bigger cities, where a number of organizations and institutional networks are at their disposal. What’s more, generations that came of age under the Official Languages Act are showing a growing interest in the French language. According to Statistics Canada, nearly a third of the country’s anglophone youths finish high school with a “good or very good” level of French, and the growing popularity of French immersion programs in English-language schools, developed in the 1960s and 70s to provide French-language education to anglophones, has schools struggling to keep up with demand. More than 34.3% of Canada’s 5.1 million students receive instruction in French, either in French-language schools in Québec, French-language schools in other provinces and territories, or English-language schools offering French immersion programs in other provinces and territories. What’s more, nearly all anglophone students in Canada take regular or advanced-level French classes as part of their province’s or territory’s basic curriculum. Canada also boasts a network of 15 French-language universities outside Québec, most in cities with significant francophone populations.

FRENCH IN THE UNITED STATES

It’s harder to pin down an exact number of francophones in the United States as no questions on French-language skills or mother tongues are asked by the United States Census Bureau. However in 2008, OIF (Organisation internationale de la francophonie) estimated that about 11 million Americans had a solid grasp of the language. Other less conservative estimates put the number of Americans with some knowledge of French at around 78 million, or nearly a quarter of the country’s population.

As of the early 2010s, 14% of primary and secondary students studied French at school (in 2006–2007 the country had roughly 64 million students). French immersion schools are also proliferating, though they remain few in number and are typically private establishments. According to the 2000 American census, French is spoken at home by some 2 million Americans—including Creole francophones—making it the 4th most common language spoken at home in the United States after English, Spanish, and Chinese, respectively. Americans who speak French at home can be located using the 2011 Language Mapper, an interactive map that the United States Census Bureau makes available to the public.

In the United States, French is spoken at home by over 6% of the population in 19 federal counties. A century ago, 85% of southern Louisiana spoke only French. Today, French is one of two official languages in the state, home to the predominantly francophone Acadiana region made up of nearly all of the state’s southern parishes. In 2014, lawmakers passed a bill in support of bilingual road signs.

In Florida, large numbers of Haitian immigrants in Miami-Dade (7.69% of Greater Miami) and Broward counties contribute to a large local francophone population complemented by flocks of Franco-Canadian snowbirds who winter in both counties and Palm Beach. This makes French the language spoken at home by 4.86% of citizens and permanent residents in Miami-Dade and 6.83% in Broward.

Come winter, 3,700,000 Canadian tourists, a third of whom are francophone, visit the beaches of Florida. What’s more, some 500,000 Canadians, including over 200,000 French speakers, own property there. Three-quarters of this number—or 150,000—reside in Broward County, where in the winter they make up about 10% of a total population of 1.7 million. Many French-language services have become available in Florida in recent years, including sections for French books and movies—many by Canadian and Québécois authors and directors—in Broward County public libraries.
From the mid-19th century to the second half of the 20th, the United States was on the receiving end of a massive exodus of Franco-Canadians. During this period, nearly 1 million people—roughly half of Canada’s francophone population at the time—migrated south, mostly to New England but also to the Midwest. At the time the phenomenon sparked as much debate—particularly in the North—as the Hispanic influx does today. Currently some 13 million Americans claim French, Franco-Canadian, or Acadian ancestry (United States Census Bureau, 2012), which may also be the case for many of the country’s 4 million Native Americans, whose peoples intermingled with the coureurs-des-bois and early settlers.

In New England 25% of the Maine population claims French Canadian, Acadian, and/or French ethnicity, and French remains the language spoken at home by just over 5% of the state’s population (nearly a quarter of the population of Aroostook County, where French speakers still represent a majority in a number of towns along the New Brunswick and Québec borders). In 2014 both gubernatorial candidates for the state, Democrat Mike Michaud and Republican Paul LePage, were proud Franco-Americans.

Elsewhere in New England 23.2% of residents in New Hampshire identify as ethnic French Canadians, Acadians, or French (10% of the population of Coös County south of Québec’s Eastern Townships still speaks French at home), as do 23.9% in Vermont, 11.6% in Massachusetts, 17.2% in Rhode Island, and 9.6% in Connecticut. French speakers represented a majority in a number of New England towns until the 1980s, and today many residents of those same localities still identify as Franco-American.

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**FRENCH IN NEW ENGLAND**

French speakers in the six New England states represent one of the highest concentrations in America. In 2010 the US Census Bureau/American Community Survey estimated their numbers at 216,849* plus an additional 64,989 French Creole speakers. The figures for French speakers in the United States as a whole pale in comparison, proportionally speaking.

*Age five or older who speak French at home

### NUMBERS BY STATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>French speakers</th>
<th>Creole speakers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>74,936</td>
<td>48,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine:</td>
<td>52,395</td>
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<td>Connecticut:</td>
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<td>Rhode Island:</td>
<td>14,197</td>
<td>5,757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vermont:</td>
<td>10,474</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Descendants of French speakers who arrived during historic periods of immigration (17th century and early 20th century) remain present in large numbers today, though numbers and proportions vary widely by state. About a third of Maine residents are descended from francophones and still identify with their roots.

### BEYOND THE NUMBERS

The vibrancy of New England’s French-speaking communities reflects the diversity of the United States as a whole, and is sustained by Franco-American, Acadian, Haitian, and—more recently—African groups and individuals. It is a relatively recent phenomenon that is being strengthened through European immigration from Belgium, Switzerland, France, and Central and Eastern Europe. The communities receive support from their own associations and professional organizations, as well as French-language groups and networks dedicated to ensuring their social and economic future.

Though French speakers in New England represent a linguistic minority and do not always speak French as their mother tongue, they are nonetheless seeking the visibility and recognition necessary to ensure they continue to play an active role in society.

Source: Raymond Pelletier, Jean-Claude Redonnet, 2013

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Source: Study conducted in 2013 by Étienne Rivard, scientific coordinator at Laval University's Interuniversity Centre for Québec Studies (CIEQ), on behalf of Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques.
The face of French-speaking North America is changing. Growing numbers of immigrants in the United States and Canada are expanding the francophone population and adding a new flavour all their own. The resulting diversity is shaping this latest chapter of the French language in North America, and it is up to the communities of today to determine how it will unfold.